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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 002234

SIPDIS

AIDAC
FOR SAN JOSE FOR USAID/OFDA, TIM CALLAGHAN

DEPARTMENT FOR USAID/OFDA, ROBERT THAYER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DECLARATION OF DISASTER FOR HONDURAS

1. As a result of the excessive flooding in Northeastern Honduras from the bands of Hurricane Beta and a cold front on October 29-31, the Acting Chief of Mission has determined that the disaster is of sufficient magnitude to warrant US government assistance. The disaster is beyond the capacity of the GOH to effectively respond, and the GOV has officially requested USG disaster assistance. The Acting Chief of Mission is therefore exercising the disaster assistance authority, as per 2 FAM 061-062.

2. The ambassador's authority of \$50,000 will be used for the purchase of blankets, mattresses, and personal hygiene kits for displaced persons relocated in shelters in the departments of Gracias a Dios, Colon and Atlantida, as well as fuel and lubricants for GOH air force helicopters to transport these items and food to the shelters in isolated locations in Gracias a Dios.

3. Official request has been made by president Ricardo Maduro in a letter to the Charge d'Affaires dated 31 October 2005.

4. Host country agencies involved in relief operations are COPECO, which is coordinating relief operations, ministry of health, which is addressing health concerns in shelters, and SOPTRAVI, which is carrying out repairs to damaged and closed secondary roads.

5. Preliminary assessment by COPECO indicates that over 11,000 persons have been displaced, of which more than 7,600 are in temporary shelters. Given the forecast of additional rains over the next 72 hours, these numbers might well rise. No deaths have been reported.

6. We do not have information on U.S. citizens in the affected areas.

7. Advisors Phil Gelman and Fernando Calderon are already in country and will continue to monitor the situation in coordination with the MDRO and local authorities. Regards.

Williard